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Viewing cable 09ASUNCION259, LUGO REPLACES FOREIGN MINISTER

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09ASUNCION259**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ASUNCION259	2009-04-29 21:11	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Asuncion

Appears in these articles:

[www.abc.com.py/nota/eua-asegura-que-lugo-presiono-y-autorizo-uso-del-comando-de-ingenieria-para-mitin-de-la-izquierda](#)
[www.abc.com.py/nota/camilo-soares-un-pararrayo-politico](#)
[www.abc.com.py/nota/usa-sigue-tratando-de-golpista-a-oviedo](#)

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAC #0259 1192111
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 292111Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7792
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 0016
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0186
RHMFISS/USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

id: 204754
date: 4/29/2009 21:11
refid: 09ASUNCION259
origin: Embassy Asuncion
classification: SECRET
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB
DE RUEHAC #0259 1192111
ZNY SSSSS ZZH

O 292111Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7792
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 0016
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0186
RHMFISS/USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T ASUNCION 000259

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/BSC MDASCHBACH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/30/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: LUGO REPLACES FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified By: DCM Michael J. Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: President Fernando Lugo named MERCOSUR Parliament (Parlasur) Representative Hector Lacognata Foreign Minister April 28. The announcement follows Lacognata's April 7 resignation from the moderate Beloved Fatherland Party and political realignment with the leftist Paraguayan Movement Toward Socialism (P-MAS). Lacognata, who served in the Chamber of Deputies from 2003 to 2008, leans left politically and has an affinity for Cuba and Venezuela. He is also an opportunist who changes political affiliations to further his own interests. We expect our relationship with Lugo's new Foreign Minister to be somewhat distant, at best. END SUMMARY.

[¶2.](#) (U) President Fernando Lugo named MERCOSUR Parliament Representative Hector Ricardo Lacognata Zaragoza Foreign Minister April 28, replacing Alejandro Hamed Franco. Lugo's announcement follows Lacognata's April 7 resignation from the moderate, pro-business Beloved Fatherland Party (PPQ) and political realignment with P-MAS, a leftist party in Lugo's Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC) coalition.

[¶3.](#) (C) Lugo's new Foreign Minister is an opportunist who changes political affiliations to further his own interests. He began his career in politics in 2001 as a campaign manager for the left-leaning National Encounter Party (PEN) but switched his political affiliation to the PPQ in 2003, realizing he had better chances for gaining seats in Congress with the PPQ. Shortly after entering office, Lacognata distanced himself from the PPQ over ideology and conflict with Pedro Fadul, PPQ's president. Lacognata stopped attending PPQ meetings years ago, but resigned the party only April 7, when his name began to surface as a possible candidate for Foreign Minister or Ambassador to Venezuela. Lacognata accompanied Lugo to Venezuela immediately before the Summit of the Americas April 17-19, fueling speculation that he would replace Hamed as Foreign Minister.

[¶4.](#) (S) Lacognata is a controversial figure with clear leftist leanings, as well as an affinity for Cuba and Venezuela. In 1985, he participated in the Medical Students Center, a radical student group. A former secretary general of the Paraguayan-Cuban Society "Jose Marti," Lacognata has made several visits to Cuba under the pretense of learning more about its medical programs. More recently, sensitive reporting indicates that Lacognata has developed a close relationship with Venezuela. Lacognata's views of the U.S. are unknown. However, in 2006, he publicly criticized the visit by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and objected to joint U.S.-Paraguayan military exercises.

[¶5.](#) (U) Lacognata was born September 6, 1962, in Asuncion. He graduated with a degree in Medicine and Surgery with a specialty in pediatrics from the National University of Asuncion in 1987. He performed his residency in Pediatric Intensive Care and Neonatology at the Escola Paulista Hospital in Sao Paulo. He is a founding member of the Paraguayan Society of Children's Intensive Care, and is accredited by the Paraguayan Society of Pediatrics. Lacognata entered politics in 2001. He served as a campaign manager for PEN in 2001 and PPQ in 2003, and was elected to the Chamber of Deputies representing Asuncion in 2003. He was Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies during 2004-05, and PPQ leader during 2003-04. He is married and speaks Spanish and Portuguese.

[¶6.](#) (C) COMMENT: We expect our relationship with Foreign Minister Lacognata, who will be sworn in on April 30, to be

somewhat distant, at best. Once Lacognata officially greets the diplomatic corps the week of May 4, Ambassador will seek a courtesy call, which should give us some additional insight regarding his goals. With any luck, Lacognata's ideological leanings will take a back seat to Lugo's pragmatism. But luck may be in short supply. END COMMENT.
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AYALDE